

THE MURDER OF THE REV. MR. VOLKNER.

TRIAL OF KEREOPA.

The preliminary trial of Kereopa commenced at Napier on December 11th, before Mr B. Sealey, R.M., and Mr J. A. Campbell, R.M. The trial was continued on the 12th, when the prisoner was fully committed to take his trial at the Supreme Court, on December 21st, on the charge of murdering the Rev. Mr Volkner. We give below the leading points of evidence taken by the magistrates:—Penetito deposed: I saw the prisoner in 1865 at Te Tekā; he urged the people of that place to become Hauhaus; it was in the spring of 1865; he went from Te Tekā to Whakatane; he asked the natives of that place to give up the Roman Catholic priests that he might kill them; they did not agree to it; Kereopa then went to Opotoki; he asked the chiefs there to let him have Mr Volkner that he might kill him; I myself heard him do so; Mokomoko, one of the chiefs, agreed to do it; Mokomoko was hung by the Europeans at the Wairoa; the day after I heard Kereopa make the demand, I started for a place called Te Pino; I returned the same day; when I got back, I saw the people assembling in a church; then I saw Kereopa with Mr Volkner's head; he was standing in the pulpit; it was wrapped in calico; then I saw him gouge out Mr Volkner's eyes; the right eye was in his right hand, and the left eye in his left hand; then I saw him put the right eye into his mouth and swallow it; I then saw him put the left eye into his mouth; it stuck in his throat; he drank something that I thought was water, till I saw the blood running down his chin; after I saw Kereopa with the head, I saw the body lying outside the church; my brother wrapped it up in a blanket. Pihana Tiwhai deposed: I live at Opotiki; I saw him and Petara at

*This is evidence
about / against Kereopa
given in Court
during his trial.*

→ stated in Court.

Source :

at Opotiki; I saw him and Patara at Opotiki; the prisoner had a basket with a European's head in it; the first words that I heard him say were, "Friends, this is a word from my god to you; if any minister or other European comes to this place, do not protect him; he must die! die! die!" Patara said next, "I am come to bring the new god to you; this is the true god; if a minister or a European come within these boundaries he shall not be spared." I knew Mr Volkner; he arrived about five days after Kereopa and Patara had come to Opotiki; he came by vessel; the vessel came up the river and lay close against the bank; as soon as the vessel came alongside, the Taranaki natives tied up the Europeans, including Mr Volkner and led them away to the gaol; I saw the whole transaction; I mean by the Taranaki natives—Kereopa and Patara, and those that came with them; next thing I saw was Mr Volkner being led away; I could not see who the native was who was leading him; I was too far off; it was one of the Taranaki natives; my wife said to me, "Don't follow them; they are putting Volkner to death." I went away to a mill near; in the evening I returned. I was told that Mr Volkner was killed, and was shown where his body was; the body had on black trousers, boots, and white shirt. There was no head on it. I asked Kereopa to let me have the body to bury it. He said, "Let the fowls of the air and the reptiles of the earth eat it." (The witness here gave some very disgusting details of the treatment the corpse subsequently received.) I saw Mr Volkner's head and that of another European afterwards at Opotiki in a tent. E. Pihapono deposed: I saw Kereopa at Whakatane on March 21. Kereopa said: "If I go to Opotiki and find a minister there I will kill him. Mr Volkner arrived at Opotiki two days after Kereopa; the vessel was taken possession of and the Europeans made prisoners. When Kereopa arrived

made prisoners. When Kereopa arrived it was dinner time, and he (witness) heard Kereopa say that "Mr Volkner was to be given up, killed and eaten." On the following day they all assembled in the church. I was in the house, and saw Kereopa in the pulpit with a war club in his hand; then I heard him say "that Mr Volkner should die on this day, and that his eyes should be eaten, and, if any one refused to obey orders, he would eat their heads off; his tribe should be destroyed and their houses burnt;" the same Kereopa said, "Go and fetch Mr Volkner." The soldiers then went out, and I followed them. I afterwards saw the soldiers who had Mr Volkner in their charge. I stopped outside the church. I saw the soldiers hand Mr Volkner's head into the church; his head was wrapped in calico. I saw the blood oozing out of the calico; at this time Kereopa was in the church. Kereopa carried the head about, telling them not to be frightened to eat it; he said that the whole of the tribe who refused to eat part of the head would be destroyed; I mean by soldiers, the men that accompanied Kereopa and Patara.—Reta deposed: Two Jews, besides Mr Volkner and Mr Grace, arrived in the same vessel. After the vessel arrived he went inland and saw Kereopa there; he was telling the people that he had received a message from his god that he was to kill Mr Volkner. I went back to Opotiki. After I arrived I saw Mr Volkner led from a whare to the church; Kereopa was alongside of Mr Volkner. I did go into the church. The next thing I saw was Mr Volkner being led from the church to a tree; Kereopa was a few yards behind Mr Volkner.

Napier, Friday.—Kereopa's trial before the Supreme Court was concluded last night. At 7.15 His Honor began to sum up. He said there was no doubt about the *corpus delicti*, or the fact of the murder. The only question was whether

murder. The only question was whether Keraopa was responsible for it, and Captain Levy's evidence alone seemed sufficient to bring the guilt home to the prisoner. The jury retired at 8.20 p.m.,

and after ten minutes' consultation, returned with a verdict of guilty of murder. His Honor passed sentence of death, with the usual comments. The prisoner passed a sleepless night.
